

“BB” – The Alumni Advisor

Measuring the importance of any one person in an organization is a difficult and subjective task. Studies have shown, through, that there is one man who can be of considerable importance in a chapter's success and survival. The “BB” is that man. The presence of a “BB” who is effective, interested, and involved can be directly related to the success of the chapter. He provides maturity where maturity is greatly needed, gives continuity to the operation of the chapter, and is a repository of chapter tradition. Chapter success and failure can be reflected in his dedication, or lack of, to the duties he has assumed. The importance of the position in our fraternity structure can hardly be overstated.

To be highly effective, a “BB” needs to know the history of the Fraternity and chapter, as well as its operations. It is, therefore, the obligation of the “BB” to see that every undergraduate member has a working knowledge of the background and operations of the general fraternity and local chapter. Such knowledge sets standards for excellence and offers challenges. He occupies, in a way, the role of a teacher. He gives the chapter the reins, but sees to it that they guide the chapter with the best interests in mind.

An interested “BB” stays with the chapter “in sickness and in health.” Those chapters whose “BB” has had three or more years experience tend to be more successful. This is not surprising; a “BB” who has a long-term perspective on the organization can be more influential in shaping its direction. It is up to the “BB” to make sure that successful practices are perpetuated and that mistakes are not repeated.

Most important, the “BB” needs to cooperate fully with the International Headquarters and encourage the chapter to do so. Every “BB”, along with the other chapter officers, should possess the Chapter Operations Manual, which can be purchased from the Headquarters. With this manual, along with other publications, he can become skilled in the training of chapter officers.

No “BB” can hope to succeed without being available to his chapter. That does not mean that he must live next door to the chapter house. In fact, he can live in another community and still be highly efficient in his work. The important consideration is the man himself and not his home base.

Finally, the “BB” is a role model. He is a living illustration of the fact that fraternity membership continues after graduation and that the values and principles taught in the chapter have a very real application in the everyday world. A survey by the American College Personnel Association of undergraduate leaders of living groups were asked to rank functions most important for their advisor. They responded in the following manner:

1. Provide advice when called upon.
2. Teach techniques of good leadership and fellowship.
3. Provide continuity with the history and tradition of the group.
4. Help members develop self-discipline and responsibility.
5. Prevent the group from breaking university (and fraternity) rules.
6. Supply the organization with information, expert knowledge, and insight gained through experience.

LOCATING THE “BB”

Where does the search begin? The obvious place is with local alumni. Get a mailing list from the Headquarters and send a general letter to alumni in the area. Many chapters might want to consider initiating a member of the faculty or a father of one of the members. Once possible candidates have been identified, ascertain their suitability (the candidate should ascertain the suitability of the chapter to him as well), perhaps through informal conversation or dinner at the house, and explain the chapter goals, values, etc. “BB”s come in all ages and from varied backgrounds; the ideal “BB” might be someone you had not

even thought could do the job. It is the chapter's responsibility to organize the search and it should not settle for anything less than the best.

It seems obvious, but it is not a common practice to clearly define the responsibilities and the relationship between a chapter and its "BB". When a man is first approached to consider becoming a chapter's "BB" there is often a good deal of confusion and/or apprehension on the part of both parties. Most, if not all, of the uncertainty can be resolved by a simple process: developing a written agreement.

THE AGREEMENT

When someone is considering/being considered for the position, he should sit down and put in writing what he will and will not do as "BB". On a second piece of paper he should write down what he believes the chapter should and should not do. Simultaneously, the chapter should come up with the same two lists. These lists should include, but not be limited to, such areas as communication, problem solving, problem prevention and interaction. List such things as which meetings the "BB" will attend and how often, what times of the day the "BB" and chapter officers can or cannot be called, what to do in case of a crisis situation, what role the "BB" will play in the membership education program, and how often the chapter finances will be reviewed. This process, on the part of both the potential "BB" as well as the chapter, forces the participants to come to grips with the "two-way street" nature of the relationship. It is not possible here to list all that the agreement might contain because each "BB" and chapter have their own individual needs. Several suggested responsibilities and the duties prescribed by **Delta Chi Law** have been provided.

Next, the potential "BB" meets with the chapter officers and they jointly work out mutually agreeable lists defining the "wills and will nots" of each side of the relationship. The results are taken back to the chapter and voted on. Once a finalized version of the two lists is approved, both parties should sign two copies of both pages. One copy goes to the new "BB" and one copy goes to the chapter. Other copies might go to the A.B.T., Greek Advisor and the Headquarters.

Once each school year, the "relationship statement" should be reviewed, updated and reaffirmed. As the chapter expands and develops, the agreement will have to evolve with it. It should also be updated if the "BB" has any changes in his life (marriage, children, new job, etc.). This idea can work for an existing "BB", Faculty Advisor, or even A.B.T. No more "I don't know what they expect from me/us" or "Why didn't he/they...?"

ELECTION AND TERM OF THE "BB"

The "BB" shall be elected by the undergraduate chapter members by majority vote and serve for a period of two years or until his successor is elected or appointed. The term of office shall begin upon the Headquarters' receipt of the Oath of Office form properly signed by the "BB".

ADMINISTERING THE OATH TO THE "BB"

Notice of the election of the "BB" of the chapter must be filed by the "C" in the Chapter Meeting Report. The Headquarters shall immediately submit the Oath of Office in written form to the "BB"-elect for his signature. It is the "BB"'s responsibility to return the signed oath to the Headquarters as soon as possible. The oath should be received in the International Headquarters by October 15 of non-convention years and should be administered every time a "BB" is elected or re-elected.

DEVELOPING A GOOD “BB”

“Chapters that are continually successful have the strong leadership and support of alumni advisors.”

A chapter “BB” must possess the skills to guide the chapter democratically toward its goals. As a problem solver, he will initiate change with the chapter; therefore, an evaluation of the current chapter effectiveness is needed. He must determine (1) the effectiveness of the chapter as a group, (2) how they can improve their effectiveness, and (3) how the group must change to become more effective. There are two major areas used to evaluate the effectiveness of a chapter. A study of the effectiveness including (1) group interaction and development and (2) assessment of the quality of leadership, will provide areas where change is needed.

ADVISING RANGES FROM TELLING TO SUGGESTING TO ASKING

1. **TELLING** is to give new information (facts).
2. **SUGGESTING** is to offer a recommendation on evidence (Past experience).
3. **ASKING** is to ensure that communication is a two-way street...that the “BB” understands the situation as seen from the undergraduates’ viewpoint.

TIPS FOR THE “BB”

1. The chapter exists to be autonomous – the advisor should offer guidance when necessary and should mold his responsibilities to **chapter** needs. The “BB” should be flexible and help the chapter become as self-sufficient as possible.
 2. Feel relaxed and at ease with the undergraduates and they will respond similarly.
 3. Work **through** the members, not **for** or **around** them. In this way they gain self-confidence and experience in decision-making.
 4. Be concerned with chapter functions but also with the members as individuals. The “BB” should act as a friend and counsel informally.
 5. Honor the confidentiality of personal matters.
 6. Do not run the chapter meetings – make worthwhile statements, not chatter.
 7. Be positive – show the chapter members you support them, rather than criticizing them.
- AVOID TAKING SIDES.

REQUIRED AND SUGGESTED RESPONSIBILITIES

CHAPTER FINANCES

The “BB” should make sure that the “D”, and preferably thy finance committee, have a realistic budget to which they strictly adhere. The “BB”, in conjunction with the Alumni Board of Trustees, should help the chapter prepare a budget prior to the end of the school year/term for the following school year/term, as well as make monthly reviews to see that the individual categories are not being overspent.

OFFICER TRAINING AND RETREATS

One of the most important roles of the “BB” plays is an educator of new and potential officers. It is important that the “BB” be familiar with all Delta Chi manuals, and especially the Chapter Operations Manual (including all of the **BRIEFs**, which the chapter should purchase for him. He should require every candidate to read the appropriate manuals, and **BRIEFs**, as well as confer with the current officer prior to the elections. After the elections, the “BB” needs to supervise the transition of officers and hold officer training workshops/retreats (See the Chapter Retreat **BRIEF**) in conjunction with the Alumni Board of Trustees. Also, he should ensure that every chapter officer has his appropriate notebook(s) and **BRIEFs** and that he reads and studies them regularly. He should continually assist officers with the general operations and procedures of the chapter and Fraternity. Furthermore, he should ensure that officers keep notebooks that will aid in the transitions and review the officer responsibility check lists with them.

ALUMNI RELATIONS

The “BB” should serve as a resource person for area alumni. He should make sure that the “E” and his committee are publishing alumni newsletters, and the “BB” should submit articles regularly. Also, he should make sure they are planning periodic alumni social functions with the chapter. The “BB” might also assist the alumni committee in planning job placement seminars, and by recruiting alumni speakers for the chapter’s membership education program.

UNIVERSITY RELATIONS

It is important for the “BB” to develop an open, positive relationship with the university administration. The main administrator with whom he will be dealing with will be the Greek Advisor on the campus. The “BB” should meet with the Greek Advisor (Dean of Student Affairs/Services, Director of Off-Campus Housing, Director of Student Services, etc.) at least twice a year. A well-timed luncheon appointment with the Greek Advisor can keep many minor chapter problems from getting out of control.

To be efficient, a “BB” needs to know campus leaders and university officials and stand high in their confidence. Especially, he should know those holding similar positions in other fraternities. These connections lead to greater confidence on the part of the chapter as well as the university.

RUSH

The “BB” should see that the Rush Chairman and his committee plan the rush program prior to leaving for the summer and winter vacations, and should periodically check on the program’s progress.

MEMBERSHIP EDUCATION

At least once during each associate membership education period, the “BB” should meet with the associate members to allow them to get to know him early in their fraternity career. Some topics which might be discussed include the organization, history, and lifetime involvement in The Delta Chi Fraternity. He should encourage and assist in implementing and improving educational and scholarship programs. (See Membership Education and Scholarship BRIEFs)

“BB” REPORTS

The “BB” is required by **Delta Chi Law** to make semi-annual reports to the Headquarters. They are due by April 30th and December 31st. Report forms are mailed to the “BB” approximately one month prior to the date on which they are due.

CHAPTER REPORTS

The “BB” can be helpful by making sure the chapter follows all reporting procedures. Several officers are responsible for reports due on specific dates. A reference sheet is enclosed so that the “BB” can become familiar with the important dates.

CHAPTER’S RESPONSIBILITIES

Communication will be one of the most important tools in building a successful relationship. Start by being totally honest. If there are problems, admit them; if you expect the advisor to be available 24 hours a day, say so; if there are mixed reactions from the members, spell them out. A new “BB” will have enough to learn as it is; he certainly does not need any unpleasant surprises. The purpose of the agreement is to avoid any conflicts and surprises. If they continually arise, then it is time to review the agreement.

Once a commitment is made, it needs to be kept. The “A” should contact the “BB” at least twice a month. Find out what concerns have arisen and deal with them directly. Do not be tempted to stick your head in the sand and hope that any misunderstandings will disappear!

How do you work with a “BB”? Consideration is the key element. Remember that he could have both job and family commitments, if not more. Do not expect unlimited capacity to respond to chapter problems. Try to time phone calls to the “real” world rather than to the chapter’s; give him a gift certificate to a nice restaurant, offer free babysitting, invite the “BB”’s family to dinner occasionally and remember him and his family with gifts or cards on major holidays; and never assume that he has absorbed by osmosis the different agendas in the chapter. When you send him a thank you note, do not forget his wife as she is making a sacrifice also (flowers are an excellent way to say thanks to her). If he has done an outstanding job, nominate him for Delta Chi’s Outstanding “BB” Award.

COMMUNICATE! Thanks the “BB” for the hours of counsel and the wisdom of experience. Do not take for granted that he knows your appreciation...demonstrate it.

SUMMARY OF SUGGESTED “BB” RESPONSIBILITIES

MONTHLY

1. Attend at least two chapter meetings.
2. Attend at least two executive committee meetings.
3. Review minutes and all chapter reports
4. Review the chapter’s financial status with the “D”.
5. Review the chapter’s spending practices and budget to make sure that they are in line.

SEMI-ANNUALLY

1. Complete “BB” reports (Due April 30 and December 31).
2. Assist chapter in publishing an alumni newsletter.
3. Oversee reporting of associate members and initiates to the Headquarters.
4. Supervise initiation of new members.
5. Visit university administration.
6. Meet with each associate member class. (Suggested topics: organization, history, lifetime involvement).

AT OFFICER TRANSITION

1. Insure smooth transition by supervising officer training.
(Conduct officer retreats and workshops along with the A.B.T.)

ANNUALLY

1. Attend the Regional Leadership Conference.
2. Make sure Form 990 is filed with the Internal Revenue Service.
3. Make sure financial records are properly audited.
4. Help plan Founders’ Day celebration.
5. Assist in coordinating summer rush activities.

BIENNIALY

1. Attend the International Convention.

OTHER GENERAL DUTIES

1. Act as an advisor to the chapter and as a liaison officer for the chapter with Delta Chi, A.B.T. and house corporation. He should also serve as a liaison between the Board of Regents and the Executive committee (See **Delta Chi Law**).
2. Assist the chapter in its scholastic, athletic and social activities.
3. Act as an ex-officio member of the Alumni Board of Trustees of the chapter.
4. Serve as a resource person for chapter for community service activities and provide professional guidance.
5. Coordinate and insure that all expulsion and resignation proceedings are in accordance with **Delta Chi Law**.
6. Meet with Headquarters staff members when they visit.
7. Arrange guest speakers from the university and community.
8. Help establish parent relations (in conjunction with the A.B.T.) with the chapter and assist with the organization of parent’s weekends. Mom’s/Dad’s Day, etc.
9. Acquaint himself with the members and associate members.
10. Determine whether or not the chapter is achieving the goals it set forth at the beginning of each semester.
11. Act as a referral agent by sending members of the chapter to other individuals who can be of assistance in resolving specific problems as they arise.
12. Help the chapter maintain good community relations and promote chapter participation in community service projects.

Please note that many of the suggested responsibilities may fall under the auspices of the A.B.T. It may or may not be necessary for the “BB” to take the responsibility for those duties which are or should be handled by the ABT.